



## CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

C. RAY NAGIN, MAYOR

October 8, 2007



The Honorable Donald E. Powell  
Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Chairman Powell:

Thank you for your letter of September 5, 2007. You asked me to outline five public assistance projects of highest priority to the City of New Orleans. I appreciate your offer of support in reaching resolution on these issues. Efforts on the projects below have been underway for some time but have yet to come to fruition. Your help in removing the barriers to their completion would be most welcome. As you point out, this is a partnership effort and we will certainly continue to do our part to move our city to recovery.

I must remind you, however, that we have provided our list of priority projects to the federal government—to FEMA and to your staff and others—literally countless times over the last two years. In fact, several of the critical public safety projects on the list below were also provided last December in response to a similar request to that of your recent letter. That they remain on our list close to a year later, that our public servants are still operating—and our citizens are still being served—out of damaged buildings and commercial trailers, is a testament to the frustrations you and I have both encountered in moving these critical recovery projects to completion through the federal bureaucracy.

Today, these projects are submitted for your consideration:

- Police and Fire Department Stations and Substations
- New combined facility: Crime Lab, Coroner, NOPD Property and Evidence, Clerk of Criminal District Court Property and Evidence
- Sanitation Transfer Station and Warehouse
- Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts
- Sewerage and Water Board: Drinking Water Distribution System

As you will understand when you work through the details of each project, each has its own set of barriers. The common denominator is that each project is important to our recovery but we have not been able to move it to completion.

Two concerns outweigh all others: we still are unable to obtain, on a timely basis, either the latest versions and appeals resolutions on many projects, or a final determination as to whether or not a building or infrastructure system is more than 50% damaged and thus eligible for replacement.

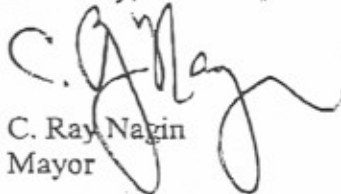
The first has made it difficult for us to obtain sufficient architectural and engineering advances to initiate projects and to rebuild smarter and stronger. As you know, our advances are calculated as a percent of the total project cost. Thus, low versions lead to low percentages, often too low even to get started. We have made dozens of suggestions as to how we might resolve this vicious circle within the current law and regulations; as of yet, none has been successful.

The second failure leaves us unable to make certain critical redevelopment decisions, such as where to make investments to create consolidated and upgraded facilities and where we can only renovate what was there before the storm. For example, our Justice Complex has benefited from a very comprehensive FEMA-funded master plan, laying out a state-of-the-art municipal complex that would contribute to both the public safety of our citizens and the effective use of our taxpayer dollars. But we cannot begin this significant initiative until we have a firm understanding of FEMA's assessment of percent damage to a number of our criminal justice buildings. Many complex and interdependent financing and project planning decisions rest on these kinds of determinations by FEMA, and cannot move forward until they are made.

Your assistance in helping us accelerate progress on these projects, as well as others, would be most appreciated. I also respectfully request that you seek the policy changes necessary to bring resolution to requests for versions, appeals and determinations of percent damage within 30 days. My Executive Director of Recovery Management, Dr. Edward J. Blakely, is your most appropriate point of contact on this going forward.

I would like to personally thank you for your continued efforts on our behalf. This, the largest manmade disaster in American history, has been and continues to be an effort in which our partnership is of critical importance.

Sincerely,



C. Ray Nagin  
Mayor

Encl.

cc: Governor Kathleen Blanco, State of Louisiana  
Dr. Edward J. Blakely, Office of Recovery Management  
Dr. Brenda G. Hatfield, Chief Administrative Officer  
Mr. Terry Ebbert, Office of Homeland Security  
Supt. Warren Riley, New Orleans Police Department  
Marcia St Martin, New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board